PFIAB:

    --Is there a need for a national intelligence data
base which establishes responsibility for the maintenance
of community files and which declares information held by
the several intelligence agencies to be the shared property
of all?

COMMENT:

    a.   There already exists at least two national intelligence
data bases.   The National Base of Imagery Derived Information
(NBIDI) delineates NPIC and DoD responsibility for the mainten-
ance of imagery information files.   CIA and DIA have been
assigned responsibility for biographic files and services
by DCID 1/9.   There are other national data bases derived
from collection assignments.   For example, NSA's formatted
files on aircraft movements, FPN, and other SIGINT data
are specified by the Community in the Intelligence Guide
for COMINT Programming (IGCP).

    b.   All of these data bases were developed after an
agreed upon Community requirement was surfaced and the tasked
agency was provided with personnel and funds to carry out
the assigned responsibility.

    c.   Current COINS files are based on agency files devel-
oped to meet in-house requirements and are made available
to the Community through COINS.   Because these files are
on COINS they could be considered national intelligence
data bases.   File content, format, and maintenance, however,
are controlled by the originating agency.

    d.   It is believed that the PFIAB recommendation proposes
that future COINS files be handled like the NBIDI.   This
could result in a request for major modifications to the
CIA AEGIS file with resultant major increased manpower costs.
Construction of a large file or any major modification to
an existing file is costly in time and personnel.   In many
instances these added features would satisfy "anticipated"
requirements of uncertain utility.   There are also security
implications in the PFIAB recommendation.   That is, other
agencies may request access to sensitive DDO, DDI, and DDS&T
reporting in the AEGIS data base.

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     e.   The PFIAB recommendation also implies that CIA could be tasked to build new files for which there is no strong internal requirement.

PFIAB:

     --Is COINS to serve intelligence analysts exclusively (for example, as a tool to manipulate raw data), or ought it also to include product consumers as participants?

COMMENT:

     This statement is unclear in that the term "product consumers" is not defined. We are assuming that this means policy makers in the Government. In theory there is no reason why product consumers could not participate in COINS. Current COINS files, however, do not seem to be pertinent for product consumer use. Additional files such as the one proposed by the IC Staff to record "planned and in process intelligence production," would have to be created for COINS. Other files such as extracts of finished intelligence and finished biographic sketches would have to be created. This is a further extension of the original COINS concept which was to share existing data bases. These additions would of course have increased fiscal and personnel implications.

PFIAB:

--Should there be a single intelligence data-handling
system, or are there legitimate requirements for a multi-
plicity of interintelligence Community systems?

COMMENT:

Implicit in the PFIAB single intelligence data handl-
ing concept is the notion of placing a multiplicity of
existing systems under the COINS umbrella. That is,
one could access the New York Times Index, the Air Force's
CIRCOL system, the NSA SOLIS system, the National Library
of Medicine MEDLARS, and CIA's AEGIS system via COINS.
Separate terminals for these systems would not be required.
Ideally this would be more efficient and provide easier
access. There are, however, major cost/benefit and technical
considerations in building a single intelligence data handl-
ing system. Technical considerations cover not only hardware
and software but also such factors as query languages,
data standards, proprietary consideration, etc. The efficiency
of a single system may be negated by these factors. A
file by file study would have to be undertaken to assess
the feasibility of moving toward a single system. CRS does not
believe that the concept is presently cost effective if it is
even practical.

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PFIAB:

As a result of its examination, the Panel believes that current improvement trends should continue, but recommends that COINS be given immediate high-level attention in order to:

    --delineate the specific objectives which a Community system should achieve, i.e., a concept paper;

    --develop an agreed Community plan to implement these objectives;

    --identify the management structure best suited to implement the plan, and manage the program on behalf of the entire Intelligence Community.

COMMENT:

    a. Up to now, most of the COINS development authority has evolved from a series of broad management decisions such as the original PFIAB recommendation to conduct a COINS experiment and the latest COINS study group [   ] report) which proposed a series of short-term improvements.

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    b. Before COINS objectives can be delineated, a plan developed, and a management structure built, intelligence community senior management needs to define a new charter for COINS. Without this direction, any interagency group will struggle with the same problems that have inhibited past COINS planning. For example, who is the system to serve, what files are required, should these files be machine based, who has the authority to determine file selection and development, and etc.

    c. Once the charter has been approved by the DCI, it would be appropriate for a full time interagency task group of users and systems analysts to develop a Community file system (not necessarily COINS) following the guidelines given by PFIAB. Sequence should be:

    (1) Assign responsibility for a file.

    (2) Create model of the file in paper form.

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(3)   Determine if a computer file would be better and more cost effective than paper and telephone.

(4)   Build compter file, with COINS as possible medium for use.

(5)   Determine if actual COINS machinery can handle the computerized file.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

17 April 1973

The Honorable Albert C. Hall
The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Intelligence)
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Mr. Hall:

Reference is made to General Lew Allen's memorandum of 9 April 1973 on the subject of COINS.

This is to advise you that NPIC will not be able to accomplish the reprogramming and software modifications necessary to make its three files available on-line to COINS by the 1 May deadline. We will, however, mount a priority effort to complete these changes so that the files will be available to COINS by 1 June 1973.

Sincerely,

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Paul V. Walsh
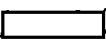Assistant Deputy Director
for Intelligence

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